

the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2024 | THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER: THE SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY

Spring music gala tickets: dinner reservations are due today

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 17

The spring music gala takes place this Friday! Dinner reservations are due TODAY. (If you are just coming for the concert and not the dinner, you may buy a ticket at the door.) The concert features the many talents of St. Stephen's wonderful staff singers in ways we don't get to experience in worship. This year's spring-themed program, "A Musical Bouquet," includes music both serious and fun across a variety of genres. The evening begins with a reception outside Palmer Hall at 5:30 p.m., which will provide an opportunity to register for the silent auction and peruse its offerings. The 6 p.m. concert is followed by a festive supper in the courtyard. All proceeds from the evening support the upcoming choir pilgrimage to England. Tickets are available at ststephensRVA.org/spring-gala. If you would like to donate an item for the auction, please contact Brent te Velde, btevelde@ststephensRVA.org.

Today's Sunday Forum and other formation offerings

This is the final day for Sunday morning formation until September. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (preschool through grade 5) takes place in several rooms on the upper floor of the parish house. Youth Bible study (grades 6-12) is in Room 4. Many Parents, One Vine, a support group for parents, takes place in Room 14.

In the Sunday Forum, parish leaders will provide a year-end update for 2023-24 as we head into the summer.

Solemn Communion experience concludes this morning

A group of parents and children who participated in Solemn Communion over the last four weeks are receiving Communion during the 9 a.m. service in the main church today. Even though the children have been able to receive Communion since their Baptism, through their reflections over the past month, they come with newfound appreciation for Holy Eucharist as a gift. Ten children in grades 3 through 5 have taken part, concluding last Sunday afternoon with a group retreat. During the retreat, the children explored the meaning of the Rite of Reconciliation, including confession with a priest. The retreat ended with a liturgy of baptismal reaffirmation with parents and children together. The hope of this unique parent-child formation is that it opens up the opportunity for shared conversation and appreciation within families about the meaning of the sacraments as the growing child reaches a place of heightened curiosity and understanding in their moral formation. We hope to offer this series again next year.

Next Sunday: the Day of Pentecost, and ministry appreciation

Next Sunday is a principal feast of the church year. The Day of Pentecost marks the end of the 50 days of Easter and celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit when those gathered in Jerusalem from many nations were able to hear the word of God in their own language. We celebrate this as the "birthday of the church." The liturgical color for Pentecost is red (for the tongues of fire above the heads of the apostles in the account from the Book of Acts), and many people like to wear red to church that day.

This will also be a day to show appreciation to all who do so much for and through St. Stephen's Church. Whether you are engaged in worship ministries, the altar guild, the flower guild, family ministry, hospitality, outreach, pastoral care, music, or any other ministry of St. Stephen's Church, we will honor and thank you during the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services and at special receptions hosted by the vestry following each service, and during the Sunday Community Supper.

At the 11:15 a.m. service, we will commission the vestry for the important work they do for our community of faith. Please come!

Are you new to St. Stephen's? Visiting?

We'd love to welcome you personally. It helps us get to know you better if you fill out a visitor card. If you prefer to do this digitally (or there's no visitor card near your seat), just scan the code and take it from there. If you take this newsletter home (we hope you will!) you can scan the code and complete the form later.





Evensong with choirs of River Road Church and St. Stephen's

The combined choirs of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and River Road Church, Baptist, will sing music planned for their choral pilgrimage to southwest England this July, including works by Gerre Hancock, Margaret Burk, Kerensa Briggs, David Hogan, William Bradley Roberts, David Hurd, and Herbert Howells.

- June 2, 5 p.m., at River Road Church, Baptist
- June 9, 4 p.m., at Washington National Cathedral



Young adults to gather at Brambly Park

SUNDAY, MAY 19 | 3:30-5 P.M.

Next Sunday, St. Stephen's young adults are cordially invited to a late spring fellowship event at Brambly Park (1708 Belleville St.) in Scott's Addition. Whether you're single, coupled, have children or don't, join other young adults before summer begins in earnest. St. Stephen's will buy the first round of drinks (whether alcohol or non-alcoholic). Thanks to the outdoor environment at Brambly Park, children are most welcome. Our young adult ministry steering group will also briefly share updates and plans for future opportunities for ministry and engagement. If you have not RSVP'd for this event, please use the QR code to do so.



Wednesday contemplative prayer hour added

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY, 9:30-10:30 A.M.

Are you longing for communion and community in silence? All are invited and all are welcome to gather for contemplative prayer and dialogue Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. We meet in person with an online option; the online link is at ststephensRVA.org/contemplativeprayer. We have now have a Wednesday option in addition to Monday and Friday.

- Monday we meet in the Lounge
- Wednesday we meet in the Small Fellowship Hall
- Friday we meet in the Lounge

These gatherings are open to all who seek a contemplative community. No reservation or prerequisite is required. If you have questions, please contact the Rev. John Jenkins, jjenkins@ststephensRVA.org.



Our 'soft space' is moving for the summer

Families who attend the 9 a.m. service in Palmer Hall know about the "soft space" offered there. This is an area with a rug, floor cushions, and children's books where children can move a bit more freely and comfortably than they can in rows of seating. Because we do not hold a regular Sunday service in Palmer Hall during the summer and because the soft space has become such a welcoming option there for families with young children, we will transform an area in the back of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd into a soft space for our summer services. This space will be open to anyone bringing young children to church, including visitors. Later this month, you'll see that three or four pews in Good Shepherd have been removed for this space. (Don't worry—the pews and their kneelers can be reinstalled as needed.) We are grateful to have so many children in our parish! If you have questions about the soft space, please speak to the Rev. Abby Kocher or the Rev. Cate Anthony.



Welcome our new bell choir director

We are excited to welcome **Paul Honaker** as our new handbell choir director. This accomplished, multi-talented musician has served as an organist, choir and handbell director, and handbell clinician at several Richmond churches and music organizations. He was the longtime minister of music as well as an associate pastor at Bon Air Baptist Church and is now music associate at River Road Church, Baptist, and artistic director of Ovation Chorus, an 82-voice community choir. We are delighted for Paul to begin his leadership of our handbell choir, and thank Mary-Sherman Willson for her service as interim director. If you're interested in ringing, please contact Paul bell-choir@ststephensRVA.org.



Vacation Bible School: register by next Sunday

JULY 21-AUGUST 1 | 9 A.M.-NOON

This summer's Vacation Bible School, "Seekers in Sneakers: Discover Jesus," is a journey of discovery designed to give children opportunities to grow through asking questions, working together, shining their light in the world, gaining insight from the Bible, and trusting Jesus. Register your child by May 19! VBS at St. Stephen's is for children age 3 (toilet-trained) through grade 5.

When you register, we'll ask you how you can support VBS with your time and talent; this includes opportunities for parents who work outside the home..

VBS is also supported by youth volunteers and many adults of all ages in our parish (not just parents); it's truly an intergenerational undertaking.

Registration closes May 19. The cost is \$50 for one child and \$25 for each additional child in the same family, with a family cap of \$100. Registration and the volunteer form are both linked at ststephensRVA.org/VBS.

May Fair House open on summer Saturdays

SATURDAYS | 9 A.M.-NOON

This summer, May Fair House will be open from 9 a.m. until noon on Saturdays during the Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's. While the shop, run by the Women of St. Stephen's, is usually closed all summer, we hope this expansion of hours will make it more convenient for customers to purchase our carefully curated gifts as well as enjoy our signature food items.

To ensure our freezers are stocked appropriately, we will also be in the kitchen this summer, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. To volunteer in the shop, please contact Betsy Anderson. To join a summer cook team, contact Marilyn Kirkpatrick or Paula Chambers. All can be reached through woss@ststephensRVA.org. (Note: the shop is closed on summer Sundays and weekdays.)

Farmers market summer hours

SATURDAYS, 8 A.M.-NOON

The Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's has begun operating on its summer schedule, with an 8 a.m. opening time. The market continues to be open until noon. Remember that **our market is open Saturdays year-round**; the hours adjust to the season.

Limeade season has begun

SATURDAYS | 8 A.M.-NOON

The St. Stephen's Choristers limeade stand has reopened at the Farmers Market @ St. Stephen's! Each limeade is made to order with freshly squeezed limes. Specialty flavors are available as well. All proceeds support the St. Stephen's Choristers and their choir pilgrimage to the United Kingdom this summer.

Dogwood staff openings for 2024-25

After a successful start in our new space, Dogwood Preschool is planning for the 2024-25 school year. We will need **lead teachers, assistant teachers, and substitute teachers** as we grow. We serve children from 16 months old to 5 years-plus with the goal of nurturing a child's creativity and self-confidence using a dynamic, age-appropriate curriculum in small classes. We are a half-day program with staff positions ranging from two days a week to five days a week. If you are interested in joining our team, contact Elizabeth Sykes at 804.665.4902 or programdirector@dogwoodpreschool.org.

Welcome to our new nursery coordinator

We are delighted to welcome **Chloe Bash** as our new nursery coordinator. The Colorado native has been in Virginia for two years. Chloe has worked with children for seven years in child care center and in-home environments. She is a lead teacher at the Goddard School in a 3-year-old classroom. Chloe has also worked in a church nursery setting, including assisting with Vacation Bible School. She brings a warm and gentle presence to the nursery, and has enjoyed meeting parents and children. Be sure to welcome Chloe!

This week's pantry needs

SOUP, PASTA

This week as you do your grocery shopping, please consider a donation of **soup and/or pasta** to stock our pantry which serves those in need. In addition, we always welcome fresh apples, oranges, and bananas for the fruit ministry, and plastic and paper bags with handles.

Save this newsletter!

Take this newsletter home; information about summer at St. Stephen's is on page 4.

Please don't be fooled!

Please don't be taken in by email scams and "phishing." Staff and volunteers associated with churches continue to be targeted by these scams. You may receive emails purporting to be from our rector or some other member of our clergy or lay staff asking you to "do me a favor," and instructing you to respond by email only and not to call them because they're busy (but really it's because the scam would then become obvious). Or someone may impersonate a friend of yours and ask you to purchase gift cards on their behalf. A recent example: "I hope you are well, do you shop on Amazon?" The scammer is trying to purchase a gift card but, they claim, there's an issue with their credit card. "Can you purchase it from your end for me, I'll send you a check regarding the refund later?" These scams are why we no longer include volunteers' email addresses in the **Spirit, eSpirit**, or on our website as contacts for various ministries and events. Be careful!





Summer at St. Stephen's Church

The program year which begins in September concludes next Sunday. Beginning May 26, our worship schedule will be slightly different, and some of the activities we have during the program year take a break until the fall.

SUNDAY SUMMER SCHEDULE

8 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite One

10 a.m., Holy Eucharist: Rite Two* (no Palmer Hall service)

5:30 p.m., Celtic Evensong and Communion*

6:30 p.m., Sunday Community Supper

8 p.m., Compline (held May 26, taking a break in June and July, and resuming in August)

*Childcare available for babies and toddlers

All services will be livestreamed



This is the time when many in our community travel, or spend weekends at the river, the beach, or in the mountains; don't lose touch with your church!

- If you are not subscribed to the **eSpirit** and/or the family ministry newsletter, now's the time to sign up. You'll know what's happening even if you're out of town. Scan the QR code to sign up.
- Bookmark the livestream page of our website so you can watch a service online when you're away: **ststephensRVA.org/thissunday**.
- Set up online payments for your pledge or other gift. The church's expenses do not take a vacation, so when pledge payments slow down during the summer, it can be difficult to stay current with the church's bills.
- Similarly, donations to our food pantry and fruit ministry sometimes take a dip when folks are away. If you're going on vacation, please consider making a larger donation of food before you go.



GOOD TO KNOW

While Sunday morning Christian formation is not offered during the summer, our nursery is available for babies and toddlers during the 10 a.m. service and the 5:30 p.m. service.

The May Fair House is closed on Sundays and weekdays during the summer, but this year for the first time, it WILL be open on Saturdays, 9 a.m.-noon!

Compline will take a break on Sunday evenings in June and July, and resume in August.

The final Wednesday supper until fall will take place May 22. Sunday Community Suppers are held year-round.

It's high season at our farmers market which is open every Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon.

The church office is closed on the following dates. *Note: There is no Morning Prayer when the office is closed.*

- Memorial Day (May 27);
- Juneteenth (June 19)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (September 2)

Compline service to take a summer break

The weekly Compline service, a candlelit, half-hour service sung by our Compline choir at 8 p.m. on Sundays, will take a summer break in June and July. The service will take place Sundays through May 26, before this break. Compline will resume the first Sunday in August.

Did you know that the repertoire for the Compline service is available on our website? Visit **ststephensRVA.org/compline**.

